

We claim:

1. The use of alkoxylates of the formula (I)

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where

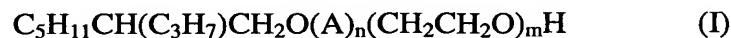
- 10 A is propyleneoxy, buteneoxy or penteneoxy,
 n is a number in the range from 1 to 8,
 m is a number in the range from 2 to 20,

as emulsifier, foam regulator and as wetting agent for hard surfaces.

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2. The use as claimed in claim 1 in surfactant formulations for the cleaning of hard surfaces in humectants, cosmetic, pharmaceutical and crop protection formulations, paints, coating compositions, adhesives, leather degreasing compositions, formulations for metalworking, food industry, water treatment, paper industry, 20 fermentation, mineral processing and in emulsion polymerizations.
3. The use as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein, in the formula (I), n is a number in the range from 1 to 6 and m is a number in the range from 3 to 14.
- 25 4. The use as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein, in the formula (I), the radical C_5H_{11} has the meaning $n\text{-C}_5\text{H}_{11}$, $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)\text{CH}_2$ or $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2$, or mixtures of two or more of these compounds.
- 30 5. An alkoxylate of the formula (I)

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where

- 35 A is propyleneoxy, buteneoxy or penteneoxy,
 n is a number in the range from 1.2 to 1.8, if A is buteneoxy, from 1 to 1.8,
 m is a number in the range from 3 to 14.

6. An alkoxylate as claimed in claim 5, wherein, in the formula (I), n is a number in the range from 1.3 to 1.7 and m is a number in the range from 3 to 12.
- 5 7. An alkoxylate as claimed in claims 5 and 6, wherein, in the formula (I), the radical C₅H₁₁ has the meaning n-C₅H₁₁, C₂H₅CH(CH₃)CH₂ or CH₃CH(CH₃)CH₂CH₂, or mixtures of two or more of these compounds are present.
- 10 8. A process for the preparation of alkoxylates as claimed in any of claims 5 to 7 by reacting alcohols of the formula C₅H₁₁CH(C₃H₇)CH₂OH firstly with propylene oxide and then with ethylene oxide under alkoxylation conditions, wherein the alkoxylation is carried out in the presence of a double-metal cyanide compound as catalyst.
- 15 9. A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the alcohols of the formula C₅H₁₁CH(C₃H₇)CH₂OH are obtained by alkaline dimerization of valeraldehyde to give an α, β-unsaturated aldehyde and subsequent hydrogenation.
- 20 10. A cleaning, wetting, coating, adhesive, leather degreasing composition, humectant or textile-treatment composition or cosmetic, pharmaceutical or crop protection formulation comprising at least one alkoxylate of the formula (I) as defined in any of claims 1 to 7 or an alkoxylate obtainable by a process as claimed in claim 8 or 9.